NOVEMBER 2006

TRANSREPORT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

SMART GROWTH DEVELOPMENTS IN CAMBRIDGE AND SOMERVILLE
Page 2

METROFUTURE WORKING SESSIONS
Page 3

GREEN LINE EXTENSION
Page 3

MPO ACTIVITIES
Page 3

ALTERNATIVE-FUEL MILESTONES
Page 4

MEETING CALENDAR

For the most recent information on the following public meetings and others that may have been scheduled after TRANSREPORT went to press, go to www.bostonmpo.org or call (617) 973-7119.

AT THE STATE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 10 PARK PLAZA, BOSTON

November 8 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. *Conference Room 4.* 3:00 PM

Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). Massachusetts Bicycle Plan Update. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 6:30 PM. *For information on the Bicycle Plan Update, go to www.massbikeplan.org.*

November 15 (Wednesday)

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 1:00 PM

Transportation Finance Commission. *EOT Board Room, Third Floor.* 3:00 PM

November 16 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4.* 10:00 AM

Calendar continued on p. 2

Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Path Construction to Begin

BOSTON REGION MPO STUDIES POTENTIAL TRAIL EXTENSION FROM SUBDURY TO FRAMINGHAM

A new corridor for bicycle and pedestrian traffic is taking shape. It has the potential to link communities in the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area to communities to the north and to the regional bicycle trail network. Construction is set to begin this fall on the northernmost section of the Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Bike Path. This first section extends nearly seven miles from the Lowell–Chelmsford line to Westford. If completed as planned, the entire trail will be a 25-mile-long multiuse trail that will eventually traverse the communities of Westford, Carlisle, Acton, Concord, Sudbury, and possibly Framingham.

The MPO recently conducted a study, at the request of the towns of Framingham and Sudbury, on the benefits and costs of extending the path nearly five miles to the south on the South Sudbury Industrial Track, part of a rail line that has not been in use since freight service was terminated in 2000. CSX Transportation Inc. currently owns the right-of-way that extends from near Route 20 in Sudbury to near Route 9 in Framingham.

The MPO received input from a task force composed of representatives from the MetroWest Growth Management Committee, the Executive Office of Transportation, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and the towns of Framingham and Sudbury.

FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR SUBURBAN TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

The Boston Region MPO is seeking applications for new transportation programs that will serve suburban communities in the region. Letters of interest are due November 28, 2006. For more information, including eligibility requirements, please visit www.bostonmpo.org/bostonmpo/resources/Suburban_Mobility/index.html.

Storrow Drive Closed to Motorized Vehicles for Hub on Wheels Bike Ride

Two thousand cyclists pedaled along a car-free Storrow Drive during the Second Annual Hub on Wheels Bike Ride

The members of the Boston Region MPO: Executive Office of Transportation, Cities of Boston, Everett, Newton, and Salem, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board, Massachusetts Highway Department, Massachusetts Port Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, Towns of Bedford, Framingham, and Hopkinton

Smart Growth Developments Moving Forward in Cambridge and Somerville

NEW VISION FOR LECHMERE STATION WITH FOCUS ON TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

The design phase is underway for a new MBTA Green Line station and busway that will be constructed as part of the next phase of the NorthPoint development in Cambridge, a $2.6 billion transit-oriented-development project on the site of a 45-acre former rail yard in Cambridge, Boston (Charlestown), and Somerville.

On October 23, MBTA officials, and NorthPoint development partners PanAm Systems and Jones Lang LaSalle, unveiled concept plans for a new multimodal station to replace the existing Lechmere stop, which will be relocated to the east side of McGrath/O'Brien Highway. The new station, which will include an elevated Green Line station and a surface busway, will be a key factor in providing car-free access to what will be a new walkable community, modeled on the principles of smart growth, where homes, offices, shops, and restaurants are in close proximity to each other and to public transit. The master plan for the site includes 2,700 homes, 2.2 million square feet of commercial space, and 10 acres of open space and parkland.

Construction began last March on the project's first phase, which includes the construction of two residential buildings and a five-acre park.

An artist's rendering of the future Lechmere MBTA station at NorthPoint

Under the partnership agreement with the MBTA, the NorthPoint developers will design, build, and maintain the new station for 10 years. MBTA officials report that design of the new station will be completed following a community and agency review process next year. Station construction is anticipated to begin by 2008.

MIXED-USE DISTRICT PLANNED FOR ASSEMBLY SQUARE

The revitalization of Somerville's Assembly Square came one step closer to fruition on October 17, when Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone announced an agreement between the major parties involved in an urban renewal project that will create a transit-oriented business, shopping, entertainment, and residential district along the Mystic River.

The City of Somerville, the Mystic View Task Force (a citizen's group), Federal Realty Investment Trust, and Swedish retailer IKEA have come to an agreement on a vision for developing Assembly Square using smart growth principles.

More than 10 million square feet of interior space will be developed, including 5 million square feet of office space and research and development space, 1.4 million square feet of retail space, and approximately 3 million square feet of residential space.

City and development planners envision a new MBTA Orange Line subway station that would provide a transit link to Assembly Square. Federal Realty Investment Trust and IKEA have offered to contribute $15 million toward the design and construction costs of the station to supplement $25 million of earmark funds from the federal New Start program.

Walking routes and a bicycle path through the area are also being planned; they will provide nonmotorized access to Somerville neighborhoods.

Calendar cont. from p. 1

November 27 (Monday)

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee. *Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3.* 4:30 PM

November 28 (Tuesday)

Urban Ring Citizens Advisory Committee. *Conference Rooms 2 and 3.* 4:00 PM

November 30 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4.* 10:00 AM

December 7 (Thursday)

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee. *Conference Room 4.* 10:00 AM

December 13 (Wednesday)

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Freight Committee. *MPO Conference Room, Suite 2150.* 1:00 PM

Regional Transportation Advisory Council. *Conference Room 4.* 3:00 PM

AT OTHER BOSTON AREA LOCATIONS

November 15 (Wednesday)

Executive Office of Transportation. Green Line Extension Environmental Review Scoping Session. *McGlynn School Auditorium, 3002 Mystic Valley Parkway, Medford.* 6:30 PM

November 15 (Wednesday)

MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Main Street Bridge Replacement. *Town Hall Selectmen's Office, Room 14, 235 North Street, North Reading.* 7:00 PM

November 30 (Thursday)

MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Reconstruction of Union Street. *Town Hall, 1 JFK Memorial Drive, Braintree.* 6:00 PM

December 1 (Friday)

2006 Massachusetts Smart Growth Conference. *DCU Center, 50 Foster Street, Worcester.* 8:00 AM. *For registration information, go to www.mass.gov/ocd.org.*

December 5 (Tuesday)

MetroFuture Working Session.* *Sheraton Ferncroft Resort, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers.* 4:30 PM

December 6 (Wednesday)

MetroFuture Working Session.* Lombardo's, *6 Billings Street, Randolph.* 4:30 PM

**For more information, go to www.MetroFuture.org.*

Public Engaged in the Future of the Region

EOT TO CONTINUE PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON GREEN LINE EXTENSION

More than 200 people attended a scoping session held at Somerville High School last month on the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) to be filed with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Unit (MEPA) of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs on the proposed Green Line extension to Somerville and Medford.

A portion of the proposed right-of-way for the MBTA Green Line extension to Somerville and Medford

Because of the enormous interest in this project, the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT), together with MEPA, will hold another scoping session on November 15. At EOT's request, MEPA has extended the comment period to November 24. See the calendar on page 2 for details on this second opportunity to offer your views on what should be should be included in the EIR/EIS.

If you saw four different paths that development in the Boston region could take, which one would you choose? Join the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's MetroFuture team on December 5 at the Sheraton Ferncroft Resort in Danvers, or on December 6 at Lombardo's in Randolph, to explore options for how the region might grow and develop over the next 25 years. MetroFuture addresses many issues that are critical to the health and quality of life for residents across the region, from access to housing and jobs, to transportation, public health, and municipal finances. Decisions made in the MetroFuture process, such as the land-use scenario, are important to the MPO because they will also be used in the development of JOURNEY TO 2030, the MPO's long-range transportation plan.

Whether you are new to the project or you are a long-standing participant, we need you! Both events will begin at 5:00 PM and free dinner will be provided. Visit www.metrofuture.com to learn more about the event.

Boston Region MPO Activities

BOSTON REGION MPO ACTION ITEMS

The MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee voted to distribute an adjustment to the fiscal years 2007–2010 Transportation Improvement Program for a 15-day review period. The adjustment incorporates changes that reflect federal programming requirements for high-priority projects and carryover transit funding in the FY 2007 element, and identfies funding for a parking study in East Milton and for commuter rail improvements on the Haverhill/Reading Line. The Committee also approved *Mid–North Shore Subregional Transportation Study* and "Newton Corner Rotary Study," two MPO work products that will be highlighted in the next issue of *TRANSREPORT*.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

At their October meeting, Metropolitan Area Planning Council staff briefed the Advisory Council on the preferred land-use scenario for JOURNEY TO 2030, the MPO's long-range transportation plan.

On November 8 the Advisory Council is scheduled to receive a briefing on public/private partnerships for rail-freight projects. See the calendar on page 1 for details.

For more information about the Advisory Council, contact Bill Moore, of the MPO staff, at (617) 973-7144 or bill.moore@ctps.org, or visit the Council's Web page located on the MPO's Web site, www.bostonmpo.org.

ACCESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE MBTA (AACT) UPDATE

In October MBTA Design and Construction Project Manager Tikam Matai provided AACT members with an overview of proposed plans for reconstruction of Brookline Village Station on the D Branch of the Green Line. Most of the work for the station renovation will consist of raising the existing platform and creating obstruction-free boarding areas for the MBTA's low-floor trolley cars. Other modifications that will bring the the station into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act include:

- The installation of Braille/tactile signage to identify the station, and tactile warning strips along the edges of the platforms
- The creation of mini–high platforms at one end of each platform to provide access to older vehicles

The MBTA's Office for Transportation Access reported that production of 155 new emission-controlled diesel buses (whose features AACT inspected in August) has begun, with shipment of the first 23 buses expected in November.

Alternative-Fuel Milestones Achieved

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) are two MPO member agencies that were feted at the AltWheels Transportation Festival, held September 22–24, for their accomplishments in improving air quality through the use of clean-fuel vehicles.

The MBTA, which is the state's largest alternative-fuel user, won the 2006 AltWheels/Massachusetts Clean Cities award for significantly reducing exhaust emissions from its bus fleet. The MBTA currently operates compressed-natural-gas (CNG) buses on the Silver Line and on some bus routes. In addition, 193 emission-controlled-diesel (ECD) buses are already in operation throughout the system and 155 more new ECD buses are expected to begin arriving in November.

Massport, whose fleet of 33 CNG-powered shuttle buses recently surpassed their 10 millionth "Clean Mile" of service, also participated in the AltWheels festival, by taking part in an "alt fuel" caravan to MIT and providing two CNG-powered buses to transport festival participants. Massport's shuttle buses carry passengers between Logan Airport terminals, the MBTA's Airport Station, and the Logan Water Shuttle Dock. They log up to 4,440 miles and consume 36,000 gallons of CNG fuel per month.

Another milestone for improved local air quality was celebrated at the MBTA's Albany Street Garage on October 13, where the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency held a press conference to announce the availability of ultra-low-sulphur diesel (ULSD) fuel to consumers at fueling stations nationwide. ULSD fuel contains 97 percent less sulphur than the diesel fuel previously available to consumers.

One of six new low-floor ECD buses that will serve the Town of Winthrop

TRANSREPORT

PUBLISHED BY THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

John Cogliano, MPO Chairman

Kenneth S. Miller, P.E., Chair
Barbara G. Lucas, Vice Chair
Transportation Planning and Programming Committee

EDITORS
Mary Ellen Sullivan
Jared Fijalkowski
Maureen Kelly

CONTRIBUTORS
Cathy Buckley Lewis
Joseph Cosgrove, MBTA
Janie Guion
William Moore

DESIGNER
Maciej Citowicki

GRAPHICS
MAPC
MBTA
Kenneth A. Dumas

PHOTOGRAPHY
MBTA
Cathy Buckley Lewis

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
State Transportation Building
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

First Class Mail
U.S. Postage Paid
Boston, MA
Permit No. 52233

TRANSREPORT is published monthly by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization to disseminate information on current transportation projects and issues in the Boston region. Comments and requests to be added to or deleted from the mailing list are welcome and should be sent either to *TRANSREPORT* Editors, Boston Region MPO Staff, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150, Boston, MA 02116, or to publicinformation@bostonmpo.org. *TRANSREPORT* is free. Its preparation is financed in part by grants from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.